

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OSLO 05213 271719Z

64

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

OES-03 FEA-01 INT-05 EB-07 COA-01 DLOS-03 OMB-01

TRSE-00 ACDA-05 /082 W

----- 005475

R 271458Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9012

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

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AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

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USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

SECDEF

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MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: N/A

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PAGE 02 OSLO 05213 271719Z

TAGS: MPOL, PFOR, NATO, NO

SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN STORTING ADOPTS DEFENSE BUDGET

REFS: (A) OSLO 4787 (NOTAL); (B) OSLO 4891 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE NORWEGIAN STORTING (PARLIAMENT) ADOPTED THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED DEFENSE BUDGET OF 4.3 BILLION KRONER FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1975. DEFENSE MINISTER FOSTERVOLL DEFENDED NORWEGIAN SECURITY POLICY AND REVIEWED MAJOR TASKS CONFRONTING HIS MINISTRY. PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE RESULTED IN RESOUNDING RE-AFFIRMATION OF NORWEGIAN MEMBERSHIP IN NATO. END SUMMARY.

1. ANNUAL DEBATE ON MINISTRY OF DEFENSE BUDGET (NOVEMBER 25) RESULTED IN PROMPT ADOPTION OF 4.3 BILLION KRONER APPROPRIATION AND REAFFIRMATION OF MAJOR LINES OF NORWEGIAN SECURITY POLICY INCLUDING MEMBERSHIP IN NATO. SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT, DEFENSE MINISTER FOSTERVOLL TERMED STRONG DEFENSE THE BASIS FOR ACHIEVING DETENTE AND SAID IT WOULD BE "IRRESPONSIBLE TO TOUCH NORWEGIAN NATO MEMBERSHIP". FOSTERVOLL IDENTIFIED THE MAJOR PRIORITIES CONFRONTING THE MINISTRY WITH RESPECT TO NORWEGIAN OFF-SHORE OIL RESERVES AND EXPANSION OF FISHING LIMITS AS FOLLOWS: (A) CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE OPERATIONS; (B) SECURITY AND DEFENSE AGAINST SABOTAGE AND GUERRILLA ATTACKS ON INSTALLATIONS AND (C) PROTECTION OF AN EXTENDED NORWEGIAN DEFENSE AREA IN CASE OF WAR.

2. QUESTION OF NORWEGIAN MEMBERSHIP IN NATO IS TRADITIONALLY RAISED BY LEFT-WING MEMBERS OF THE STORTING. THIS YEAR'S PROPOSAL THAT NORWAY LEAVE NATO, INTRODUCED BY THE SOCIALIST ELECTORAL LEAGUE'S (SV) ARENT HENRIKSEN, WAS DEFEATED BY A LOPSIDED VOTE OF 110-13.

3. A PROPOSAL FROM THE PRO-DEFENSE CONSERVATIVE PARTY TO ADD 31 MILLION KRONER TO THE BUDGET AND THUS ADHERE MORE CLOSELY TO THE 2.25 PERCENT GROWTH RATE CALLED FOR IN THE LONG RANGE DEFENSE PLAN WAS DEFEATED. ALSO DEFEATED WERE ADDITIONAL SOCIALIST ELECTORAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 OSLO 05213 271719Z

LEAGUE ATTEMPTS TO CUT THE DEFENSE BUDGET, ALTHOUGH THE CUTS PROPOSED BY SV WERE SUBSTANTIALLY SMALLER (OVER ONE BILLION KRONER) THAN LAST YEAR.

4. COMMENT: MAJOR NEW ELEMENTS IN THIS YEAR'S DEBATE WERE DEFENSE MEASURES RELATING TO PROTECTION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF, OFF-SHORE OIL RESOURCES AND FISHING LIMITS. NORWAY'S OBVIOUS NEW DEFENSE RESPONSIB-

ILITIES IN THESE AREAS APPEARS TO HAVE HAD THE IRONIC
EFFECT OF LESSENING FAR LEFT ACROSS-THE-BOARD OPPOSITION
TO NORWEGIAN SECURITY POLICY AND THE TONE OF THE SV
ATTACKS WAS SUBSTANTIALLY MORE CONCILIATORY THAN LAST
YEAR. BASED ON THE DEFENSE BUDGET DEBATE AND OTHER IN-
DICATORS, OUR ASSESSMENT IS THAT THERE HAS BEEN
NO EROSION OF PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT FOR MEMBERSHIP IN NATO,
A MEMBERSHIP WHICH REMAINS A FUNDAMENTALLY
UNCHALLENGED CORNERSTONE IN NORWEGIAN SECURITY POLICY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY BUDGET, MEMBERSHIP, MILITARY PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974OSLO05213
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740345-0499
From: OSLO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974118/aaaaafx.b.tel
Line Count: 125
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: (A) OSLO 4787 (NOTAL); (B) OSLO 4891
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 11 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 APR 2002 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <14-Aug-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NORWEGIAN STARTING ADOPTS DEFENSE BUDGET
TAGS: MPOL, PFOR, NO, NATO, (KRONER), (FOSTERVOLL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005